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Policy 504 ELL Identification and Language Instruction Educational Program Policy (LIEP)

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ELL Identification and Instructional Policy

Purpose

Three Rivers Montessori Charter School is committed to ensuring that all English Learners (ELs) have equitable access to high-quality instruction and the opportunity to achieve academic success. In alignment with state and federal law, we provide comprehensive services designed to support English language development and academic achievement.

In Minnesota, the English Learner (EL) Language Instructional Program policy is primarily guided by the Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act and the Education for English Learners Act. These statutes establish comprehensive requirements for identifying, instructing, and supporting English learners across the state.

Definition of an English Learner in the State of Minnesota

An English Learner is defined in Minnesota as a pupil in Kindergarten through grade 12 or a Pre-kindergarten student enrolled in an approved voluntary Pre-kindergarten program under section 124D.151 who meets the following requirements (2015 Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.59, Subdivision 2):

1. The pupil, as declared by a parent or guardian (on the Home Language Questionnaire), first learned a language other than English, comes from a home where the language usually spoken is other than English, or usually speaks a language other than English.
2. The pupil is determined by a valid assessment measuring the pupil's English language proficiency and by developmentally appropriate measures, which might include observations, teacher judgment, parent recommendations, or developmentally appropriate assessment instruments, to lack the necessary English skills to participate fully in academic classes taught in English.

Definition of the EL program

The EL program provides EL instruction using various instructional models and appropriate instructional materials. The EL program integrates language and content to support students' achievement of English language proficiency and meet State academic standards. All EL instruction will be aligned to grade-level Standards, and all grade-level instruction will include supports that allow for access and promote language acquisition.

Classroom teachers have primary responsibility for all students, including those with English learning needs. Staff will be trained in the alignment of ELD and content Standards through professional development. In addition:

- Trained teachers provide direct English language instruction to students in four domains of instruction: Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing;
- Licensed teachers collaborate with classroom/content area teachers and student support staff, to support students' success based on each student's English learning needs;
- All staff provide culturally responsive resources and services to EL students and their families;
- Licensed teachers align their program with the district's curricula in English literacy, Minnesota's ELD Standards, and Minnesota State content Standards.

Our licensed teachers participate in mainstream curriculum writing and lesson planning with a focus on language scaffolding and targeted support. Instruction focuses on developing English communication and academic language skills through listening, speaking, reading, and writing for success in school. The mainstream curriculum is supported through the WIDA language proficiency standards. Along with EL instruction, students receive content-area assistance or instruction as coordinated by the Intervention teacher with the general classroom teachers.

An initial identification procedure is used with all students enrolling at Three Rivers Montessori. The steps to identify (ELL) students for language instruction are as follows:

1. Identification and Placement

In compliance with Minnesota State guidelines, Three Rivers Montessori follows standardized procedures to identify students who may qualify as English Learners. These include:

1. Administration of the Minnesota Language Survey at enrollment
2. English language proficiency assessments to determine eligibility

Students who qualify are placed into Language Instruction Educational Programs (LIEPs) that correspond with their current proficiency levels and support their academic success.

2. Instructional Program Requirements

Three Rivers Montessori implements Language Instruction Educational Programs (LIEPs) that:

1. Address both Minnesota Academic Standards and English Language Development (ELD) Standards
2. Are grounded in research-based practices and sound educational theory
3. Incorporate effective instructional methodologies, including bilingual instruction when appropriate
4. Demonstrate effectiveness in increasing English proficiency and academic performance
5. Include a written scope and sequence of EL services, which is available to parents upon request

3. Staffing and Professional Development

Three Rivers Montessori ensures that:

1. EL students are served by appropriately licensed educators, including those who have obtained licensure through alternative certification routes
2. All staff working with EL students receive ongoing, high-quality professional development focused on:
 - a. Effective instructional strategies
 - b. Curriculum implementation
 - c. English language assessment practices
3. Instructional paraprofessionals meet educational qualification standards when supporting licensed teachers

4. Family and Community Engagement

We recognize the vital role families and communities play in student success. Three Rivers Montessori:

1. Provides clear and accessible communication to families, including notices in languages they understand

2. Offers opportunities for families to engage in their child's education and the school community
3. Designs programming that is multicultural and multilingual
4. Actively seeks feedback from families to improve and inform EL services

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure continuous improvement, Three Rivers Montessori:

Will form a team and meet annually to discuss the multilingual education program and current needs of the students, their families and communities. This committee will include a representation of all stakeholders, including students, parents, community members, grade-level/content teachers, administrators, and multilingual learner teachers and support staff.

This committee will focus on analyzing the program components, student progress based on various levels of assessments, and collection of parent input. Students are assessed annually to ensure appropriate EL services are being provided. These assessments primarily include ACCESS testing, which is given each spring to all students receiving EL instruction. Additionally, the teacher will monitor progress in all four language domains. In using this data, classroom and EL teachers make an informed decision on how to best serve the students. Data which is collected from each student is confidential.

The district meets annually to review data related to current and exited English learners in order to:

- Use data available from the state (ACCESS, Progress Indicator, MCA, Graduation, Demographic, etc.) to improve programming and instruction.
- Identify data that is only available at the local level (student work, formative assessments, perception data, etc.)
- Differentiate analysis for particular groups (LTEL, SLIFE, Former EL)

6. EL Program Exit Procedures

Students will qualify for the EL Program until they meet MDE exit criteria (when ELs reach a level of English proficiency that allows them to fully access the grade level curriculum) on the ACCESS test: If ACCESS results are 4.5 overall with no more than one domain lower than 3.5, they must be exited and reclassified in MARSS to EL-N by the beginning of the school year and no longer receive EL services. Upon exit, the EL staff will call or send a notification letter to the family (in a language and format accessible to the family) within 30 calendar days.

The letter will explain:

- Which assessment was used
- Description of how scores informed placement
- Where to access written policies and procedures/information

7. Monitoring Exited Students

Students who are exited from EL services are monitored for 2 years following their exit. If, at any point during that time it is decided by the team that the student should again receive EL services, based on data/evidence of an EL need, the district can rescreen a student utilizing the WIDA Screener. The results of the screening will be analyzed similarly to a new student and, if the student is found to be eligible for services based upon those scores they may receive EL services again.

8. Family and Community Communication Procedures

Our district values transparency with families and the community and accommodates their preferred modes of communication. They are notified via multiple modes to ensure they are aware of their right to request it at any time:

- The plan is available on our school's Parent Resource page.
- EL Program brochures will be provided to families when a MNLS reports a language other than English.
- Classroom teachers explain and make copies of the LIEP plan available to families at parent/teacher conferences (Interpreters are available).
- Our school families are sent a link to the website, which includes resources, contact information and our LIEP plan.
- During at least one of our Parent Advisory Committee meetings annually, we solicit input on the program, services and updates to the LIEP plan (see Parent Advisory Committee section below).

At Three Rivers Montessori, families and their broader communities are integral to our mission, vision, and educational framework. We recognize that building strong, positive relationships with families fosters the trust necessary to best serve their children. When we engage in meaningful partnerships with families and communities, we are able to:

- Involve families directly in their child's educational journey
- Empower caregivers with tools and strategies to support their child's language and academic development
- Increase understanding of English Learner (EL) programming and available supports
- Strengthen community-wide awareness and participation in shaping an EL program that is responsive to the diverse and evolving needs of multilingual learners and their families

In alignment with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and its emphasis on meaningful family and community engagement, our school prioritizes professional development for staff to foster culturally responsive, inclusive, and welcoming environments.

Through collaboration and professional development, educators receive ongoing support and training to build authentic relationships with families and to promote a school climate that honors and reflects the linguistic and cultural diversity of our community.

Communication

Three Rivers Montessori values the essential role of families and community members in supporting student learning and language development. In alignment with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and federal guidelines (DOJ Fact Sheet, 2015), our school is committed to fostering two-way communication and ensuring equitable access to school programs and services for families of multilingual learners.

Interpretation and Translation Services

To support meaningful engagement, we ensure all families have access to trained interpreters, especially during formal communication such as:

- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:**
Trained interpreters are available for all families who need language assistance. Conferences are scheduled with the help of bilingual liaisons, who contact families directly to arrange times. Quiet, private spaces are reserved to support clear interpretation. Teachers provide academic updates using both report cards and direct conference discussions tailored for multilingual families.
- **Home-School Communication:**
All vital school documents and notices are translated into the primary languages of our students. When appropriate, bilingual liaisons assist in contacting families to explain events, forms, and school services. An on call Language Line is used when in-person interpreters are unavailable in a family's home language.

Ongoing Two-Way Communication

Beyond formal meetings, we cultivate strong relationships with families through frequent, culturally responsive communication and events designed to both inform and listen:

- **Annual EL Family Meetings:** These meetings welcome families into the school, offer opportunities to ask questions, and solicit input on programming, services, and support needs.
- **Informational Sessions & Activity Nights:** These events provide resources and updates on EL programming, assessments, academic expectations, and family rights. Families also receive information on topics such as:

- Academic support/homework help
- Extracurricular activities and community engagement
- State testing requirements
- Legal resources and family support

Cultural Liaisons and Registration Support

Bilingual liaisons are critical to home-school connections. They proactively:

- Contact families before school events
- Assist with event interpretation
- Support the student registration and enrollment process
- Serve as ongoing contacts for families with language support needs

Parent Surveys and Feedback Mechanisms

To ensure our communication methods remain effective, annual surveys are distributed to families. The responses help determine whether current practices meet their needs or require adjustments. This continuous improvement model ensures that family engagement strategies remain inclusive and relevant.

Parent Advisory Committee and Representation

Three Rivers Montessori's **Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)** includes diverse family representation to ensure multilingual voices are embedded in school and district-level decision-making. Parents are also invited to participate in focus groups and other advisory opportunities that shape EL programming, academic initiatives, and community partnerships.

9. Legal Compliance and Equity

Three Rivers Montessori's EL policy is aligned with:

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
2. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
3. The LEAPS Act (Learning for English Academic Proficiency and Success), which values multilingualism and promotes cultural competency

Students demonstrating proficiency in multiple languages may qualify for Bilingual or Multilingual Seals, recognizing their linguistic accomplishments.

Elementary English Learner (EL) Program Scope and Sequence

Three Rivers Montessori provides structured, differentiated English Language Development (ELD) services aligned with the WIDA English Language Development Standards and Minnesota Academic Standards. Services are designed to meet the unique linguistic and academic needs of English Learners (ELs) through a combination of pull-out and push-in instruction.

Service Delivery Model

1. Pull-Out Services:
EL students receive direct, small-group instruction outside the general education classroom. Focus areas include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Instruction is aligned with grade-level content and WIDA standards.
2. Push-In Services:
EL students receive language development support within the general education classroom. Support is coordinated with the classroom teacher and targets language demands embedded in content instruction.

Note: EL students at WIDA Levels 1–3 will typically receive a combination of both service types. Services may be delivered five days a week, and the delivery model is based on individual student needs and proficiency levels.

Service Time Guidelines by Grade and WIDA Level

WIDA Level	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
Level 1	45–60 min/day	60 min/day	60 min/day	90 min/day	90 min/day	120 min/day
Level 2	30–45 min/day	45–60 min/day	45–60 min/day	60 min/day	60 min/day	60–90 min/day
Level 3	30 min/day	30–45 min/day	30–45 min/day	30–45 min/day	30–45 min/day	30–45 min/day
Level 4	20 min/day (Push-In)	20 min/day (Push-In)	20 min/day (Push-In)	20 min/day (Push-In)	20 min/day (Push-In)	20 min/day (Push-In)

Individualized Adjustments

Service minutes may be adjusted based on individual student needs. All adjustments will be documented in the student's English Learner Learning Plan and reviewed regularly to ensure student progress and appropriate support.